

REMARKS

In the May 11, 2004 Advisory Action, the Examiner stated that the application was not in condition for allowance because "there is no explanation as to how destination addresses can be used to block junk emails" (continuation of item 5, lines 1-2). Given the explanation that was provided in the April 20, 2004 Amendment and the telephonic Examiner Interview on March 23, 2004, it is unclear what further explanation is needed.

In case the reason that the explanations have not been understood is the use of the term "blocking" in the preamble of the claims, the independent claims have been amended to recite a "device for blocking routing junk email" (e.g., claim 1, line 1). As discussed in the April 20, 2004 Office Action and during the March 23, 2004 Examiner Interview, the claims are directed to a system that enables users to reduce the amount of spam received with non-spam e-mail by providing a mechanism for processing email differently based on destination address. Submitted with the April 20, 2004 Amendment was an Information Disclosure Statement for printed web pages that describe a service from Yahoo! that appears to be within or close to the scope of the claims. The Yahoo! web pages were not being submitted as prior art, since there is no indication that the service existed prior to filing of the subject patent application.

As discussed at the Examiner Interview and as illustrated by the Yahoo! web pages, the present invention enables email to be processed based on the destination address. This enables similar (or dissimilar) email addresses to be used by a single person at a single Internet Service Provider (ISP) to be processed in different ways. Unlike the conventional spam blocking methods that process email based on content or sender addresses, the present invention enables users to take control of how their email is processed based on who uses a specific email address to send them email. For example one or more email address could be given to commercial organizations, one or more other addresses given to friends and relatives and one or more other email addresses given to business associates.

During the March 23, 2004 Examiner Interview, the Examiner requested an explanation of how claim 1 corresponds to the disclosed embodiment illustrated in Fig. 1A. As described at page 12, line 13 to page 13, line 7, mail extracting unit 3 in Fig. 1A extracts a mail address indicating a destination for received email, while processing content storing unit 2 stores pairs of addresses and corresponding processing methods, as represented by table 2A in Fig. 1B. Thus, in the embodiment illustrated in Fig. 1A, the processing content storing unit 2 corresponds to the storing unit recited in claim 1. Although there is no box labeled "extracting" in Fig. 1A, the extracting operation recited as being performed by the mail address extracting unit in claim 1

could be performed in mail accepting unit 3 prior to or as part of the box labeled "MATCHING". The operations, "matching" (claim 1, line 6) and "processing" (claim 1, line 8), recited as being performed by the mail processing unit match labels of boxes inside the mail accepting unit 3 in Fig. 1A.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to approve the change to Fig. 1A in the April 20, 2004 Amendment to show that information passes from processing content storing unit 2 to mail accepting unit 3, so that the processing method indicated in the table stored in processing content storing unit 2 can be performed in the block labeled "PROCESSING" in mail accepting unit 3.

If there are any further questions regarding the clarity of language in the claims, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone to arrange another Examiner Interview to resolve any remaining issues.

Summary

It is submitted that the references cited by the Examiner, taken individually or in combination, do not teach or suggest the features of the present claimed invention. Thus, it is submitted that claims 1-3, 9-11 and 17 are in a condition suitable for allowance.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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